

31st Fighter Wing: The U.S. Air Force's fighter wing south of the Alps.

THE VIGILEER

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Aviano Air Base, Italy

Fly Bys

Construction changes

Due to construction at the Aviano Area One entrance, inbound traffic is rerouted to the entrance adjacent to the Aviano Medical Clinic. Outbound traffic will exit as usual. The Aviano Area One entrance is scheduled to re-open by July 24.

Parking lot closure

The Aviano Bowling Center and Mini-Mall parking area will be partially-closed Tuesday and Wednesday. The parking area will open Thursday.

Buon Appetito closure

The Buon Appetito Dining Facility in Area Two is closed for one month due to equipment upgrades.

Senior NCO workshop

NCOs selected for promotion are invited to sign up for the Senior NCO workshop July 14 to 16, organized by the Aviano Top 3. Promotees will receive an invitation to this very important career development workshop. The SNCO promotion list is released next week, and will appear in next week's Vigileer. Call Master Sgt. Dave Poulin at Ext. 4480 for more information.



Senior Airman LaKisha Croley

Finì Finale

Brig. Gen. Mike Worden gets hosed by his wife, Lori, after his "Finì Flight" Tuesday. It's tradition for pilots to get hosed with water or champagne after their final flight with the 31st Fighter Wing. General Worden relinquishes command of the wing to Brig. Gen. Philip Breedlove in a morning ceremony today.

Roundup keeps mission hopping

Airmen chase for rabbits to keep flightline clear of animals

By Airman Rebecca Maurer
31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs staffwriter

More than 120 Airmen stretched red-rover-style across the flightline here June 8 for a rabbit roundup.

The purpose of the early-morning event was to capture the small animals, which pose a threat to aircraft. More than 20 animals were released back

into the local community that same day with the support of the Italian Wildlife Association.

"It's a humane way to remove the rabbits from the flightline," said Airman 1st Class Micah Baker, 31st Maintenance Squadron Airman and roundup volunteer. "It saves rabbits' lives and protects the [flightline] environment and equipment."

See RABBIT, Page 7

Congratulations: July 2 is a down day since Aviano Airmen went 31 days without a drunk driving incident. July 5 is a family day.



Farewell, Chief

31st Fighter Wing Command Chief Master Sgt. Dan Gill retires from the Air Force after 27 years of pride, honor and service - and a variety of uniform changes.

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Safety Seats

From highchairs to bouncers, children sit in a lot of "special seats." Yet one seat has the power to save a child's life in the event of a car wreck. Find out more about children's safety seats.

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Music Man

He sat in front of the Aviano Base Exchange, sometimes playing the blues, other times playing soulful jazz. Who's this Aviano musician? He's the Music Man!

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31st Fighter Wing

Mission: Accomplished

Commander reflects on time as leader of "World's Greatest Fighter Wing"

**By Brig. Gen.
Mike Worden**
*31st Fighter Wing
commander*

When I arrived here in October 2002, we could sense the approaching call to Air Expeditionary Force duty the "Global War on Terror" presented the 31st Fighter Wing.

At my first commander's call, I revealed the three elements of my command philosophy which characterized my tenure. I challenged you to live the core values of integrity, service and excellence; to focus on building readiness; and to develop your leadership every day. I saw you take this charge and accomplish some incredible feats.

To better prepare for the pending Operation Iraqi Freedom, we sharpened our focus on readiness. We created a decision-making Wing Readiness Council to better accentuate and prioritize our readiness efforts.

Additionally, we came up with a new wing mission statement: "To conduct and support dominant, expeditionary air combat." And to better connect everyone in the wing with that mission statement, we came up with our three "D"s: to Defend and sustain the base, to Deploy and support the force; and to decisively Defeat any enemy. These efforts fostered a unity of effort that led to some terrific accomplishments.

Soon enough, we were called to play a vital role in driving the tyranny of Saddam Hussein from Iraq forever. When we weren't leading the way, we were supporting the cause.

You supported more than 12,000 transiting soldiers during their movement to Southwest Asia. You served more than 1,200 steak and lobster dinners to our Army brethren as they prepared to make history with



Senior Airman LaKisha Croley

Brig. Gen. Mike Worden

their airdrop into Northern Iraq to open up a northern front—the largest drop since Operation Just Cause.

You ensured the families were taken care of while our Airmen were away, and when our people came home, you made sure they received a hero's welcome.

When we were called upon to demonstrate our ability to perform in inspection after inspection, you did so with great pride and professionalism to the amazement of everyone who visited here. You did this despite limitations in preparation time and despite having many of our finest performers downrange serving in OIF and OEF.

We won the Department of Defense's 2003 Outstanding Antiterrorism and Force Protection Award. We were U.S. Air Forces in Europe's winner of the Commander in Chief's Outstanding Installation Excellence Award and a finalist for the Air Force Award.

Aviano was the first USAFE base in many years to endure a NATO TACEVAL inspection. We also led new surety missions and resultant inspections for NATO and EUCom.

Winning USAFE's

Installation Excellence Award was a fitting recognition to the hard work of Team Aviano. We watched our Pride Days evolve and be recognized into USAFE's Combat Proud program.

Many U.S. and international distinguished visitors, including our own Air Force chief of staff, Secretary of Defense and even the Vice President visited Aviano to meet and thank our amazing people and our Italian friends.

For the first time since the wing came to Aviano, you reduced DUI rates by one third and enjoyed four days off for 31-day streaks without a DUI. Someone is likely now alive that otherwise may not have been.

Our volunteer program more than doubled, resulting in a new Freedom Park and an underground playground.

It led to many activities supporting Airmen and families and charities throughout Europe.

The list of accomplishments reflecting your pride and excellence goes on and on. It is a result of committed leadership throughout the ranks and throughout our community. Because so many of you care and get involved, Aviano has become an even better place to live and work.

Lori and I are now heading to serve from the Pentagon. These last 20 months are easily the highlight of our 27 years of service.

It is because of who you are and what you represent. You are fully-committed servants of freedom and you represent the best of America and NATO.

We are humbled and grateful most of all for the honor of serving alongside you and receiving your ultimate gift—your friendship and respect.

We wish you all the best as we "Return With Honor" from the World's Greatest Fighter Wing.

Chief retires after 27 years

By Senior Airman Julie Weckerlein

31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs editor

The 31st Fighter Wing command chief master sergeant retired here recently after 27 years of Air Force service.

Chief Master Sgt. Daniel Valdez Gill ended a long and eventful career with a ceremony and celebration June 1.

"It's amazing the things I've witnessed and experienced since joining the Air Force," he said. "I wouldn't change a single thing about it at all."

Chief Gill's retirement at the base of the Italian Alps is a long way from his humble beginnings. Born to a young mother in San Antonio, Chief Gill was raised by his grandmother in a poor neighborhood in the Texas city.

"We didn't have much when I was growing up, and English wasn't my first language," Chief Gill said. "Yet, I had a happy childhood and if there was anything my family taught me, it was the importance of education."

That thirst for education is what drove Chief Gill to enter the Air Force in 1977 after high school. Thus began a journey that took him to many locations around the world.

"The neat thing is that as I grew and learned more things, more opportunities opened up for me," he said. "The Air Force provided for me the opportunity to follow my interests and try new things, so that I could develop as an Airman and as a person."

In the course of his service,

the chief earned three associate degrees in applied science, a Bachelor of Science degree, a Master of Arts degree in management and attended a variety of military professional courses.

"The Air Force provides such a wealth of opportunities. No other business or organization offers so much to its people as the Air Force does," he said.

Chief Gill credits his time as a military training instructor for showing him the truths of human nature. "I was able to see people from all walks of life, at all different levels," he said. He said his time as a first sergeant was a lesson of compassion and understanding.

Chief Master Sgt. Reggie Williams, acting command chief, said, "I believe because of the leadership he displayed here, future generations will continue to serve in the greatest Air Force in the world. He had that much of an influence, because of his compassion and concern for the Airmen."

One thing that Chief Gill will remember fondly about his service is the changes he's witnessed.

"I've gone from Class A's to combo one, summer and winter to double knits to the 'new uniform,' from silver stars on my chevrons to no stars to white stars to the master sergeant stripe on top," he said. "I've been cut-back, down-sized, right-sized, restructured, reorganized,



Airman Desiree Hayden

Chief Master Sgt. Daniel Valdez Gill poses outside an F-16 jet shortly after his recent incentive flight.

centralized, decentralized, outsourced, privatized, transformed, force shaped and force developed."

He said the biggest lesson, perhaps, is that as an Airman, change is inevitable. "How you deal with it as future leaders is going to be one of your biggest challenges," he said.

Chief Gill, his wife, Lisa, and their daughter will now settle in San Antonio in the house they recently built. Other than lots of golf and riding his Harley around the "United States of Texas," the chief doesn't have any big plans, and that's okay. That's what he intended.

"Luckily, the Air Force taught me well enough to plan for the future. I was able to prepare myself for life after my military career," he said. "My wife is Hawaiian and she has that wonderful, islander laid-back personality. I plan on adopting that same attitude."

E-8 promotion

Testing cycle window changes to December

All Air Force master sergeants competing for promotion to senior master sergeant will now take the U.S. Air Force Supervisory Examination test between Dec. 6 and 17.

The testing cycle will no longer be in January.

Air Force officials said ongoing air and space expeditionary force deployments supporting the war on terror have dramatically reduced the number of eligible Airmen available to test during the current testing window.

Moving the testing cycle will allow more time for out-of-cycle testing before promotion release. The change will not affect the promotion announcement or the months during which promotions are made for the cycle. Testing conducted after Dec. 17 will be considered out of cycle.

For more information, Aviano Airmen should call Ext. 7216. (Courtesy of Air Force Personnel Center News Service, located at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas)

Bag Sale: The Aviano Thrift Shop conducts a bag sale on all thrift-shop-property items today 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. in Area Two Bldg. 224.

Travelers rejoice: Air Force expands space-A lodging window

The Air Force Services Agency director at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, announced recently an expanded space-A available reservation policy designed to maximize occupancy at lodging facilities.

Under the new system, lodging officials can accept and confirm space-A lodging reservations up to 30 days in advance based on low projected occupancy rates, Arthur Myers wrote in a policy memorandum.

The window for reservations decreases as the percentage of projected occupancy rises.

For example, when a projected occupancy rate is 65 percent or less, space-A guests can make reservations up to 30 days in advance.

At 80 percent, the reservation window is two weeks.

Under this new system, higher priority customers may not bump space-A customers with confirmed reservations, Mr. Myers said. Neither can they be bumped once they are assigned lodging except during contingencies, emergencies or when the installation commander determines higher priorities exist.

Mr. Myers also said commanders may establish a policy limiting the number of days space-A guests may stay in on-base lodging to no more than 30 days per year.

Aviano community members can call the Aviano Mountain View Lodge at Ext. 5041 for local space-A lodging information. (Courtesy of Air Force News Service)



Airman Scherrie Gates

Rabbit roundup volunteers watch as an Italian Wildlife Association worker puts a rabbit in a wooden crate for removal from the base June 8. The rabbits were released into the local communities, a safe distance from harm's way.

RABBIT, from Page 1

The Rabbit Roundup takes place at least once a year to reduce the number of critters on the runways, which reduces the possibility of a wildlife strike on the runway and prevents damage to aircraft. The animals are deaf from the noise of the aircraft and can't hear them approaching. Rabbits can get sucked into engines or hit by landing gears during takeoff and landing.

"Even something as small as a rabbit can do a lot of damage to an aircraft," said Capt. Tom Kilroy, chief of 31st Fighter Wing flight safety. "[The roundup] helps keep flight operations running smoothly."

As a part of Project Smart, the roundup

prevents a rabbit infestation.

The 31st Fighter Wing Safety Office found Airmen to be the best means of managing the bunny problem, due to their enthusiasm and cost-effectiveness.

"Chasing rabbits is a good experience for them," said Master Sgt. Charles Mangosing, 31st Fighter Wing Flight Safety Office. "It's fun to try to keep the rabbits from breaking their line and chase them into the nets."

Due to a lack of funding, the rabbit roundup will continue using volunteers rather than trained dogs. However, the safety office hopes to raise extra funds to provide refreshments to participants next year.

RESCON CORNER

	DUIs	MVAIs*
Week	0	0
28 days	0	5
Year	9	18

31: Days the 31st Fighter Wing goes without a DUI

1, 650: Days the 31st Services Squadron goes without a DUI

RESCON Bravo

We made it 31 days without a DUI, and so July 2 will be a down day, making it a four-day Independence Day weekend.

Over the past 28 days, even though the 31st Fighter Wing had no DUI, we did have five MVA/I s, which continue to be a problem for us here at Aviano, as well as across U.S. Air Forces in Europe.

Recently a USAFE motorcycle rider, whose wife was a passenger on his bike, had a major accident; he is currently in critical condition.

We need everyone to accomplish our mission so continue to "Play it SMART."

*MVAI: Major Vehicle Accidents with Injuries

Scrapbook party: Scrappers are invited 3 to 9:30 p.m. Saturday at the Aviano Baptist Church. Write Lainee@garlic.com for information.

Sortie Board

	Hours	Sorties
31st FW		
Goal	434	283
Ahead or Behind	225.9	-32
510th FS		
Goal	273.2	184
Ahead or Behind	38.4	4
555th FS		
Goal	160.8	99
Ahead or Behind	187.5	-36

Communications Airman found guilty in court martial

Airman receives confinement, discharge for malingering, drunk and disorderly conduct

A 31st Communications Squadron member was tried by a summary court-martial here June 7 and 8.

Airman 1st Class Justin Alexander was found guilty of violating Uniform Code of Military Justice Article 115 (malingering) and Article 134 (drunk and disorderly conduct).

The summary court officer sentenced him to 20 days confinement and reduction to E-1.

Airman Alexander told his supervisors he had been diagnosed with leukemia, which was incorrect. He also told them he received weekly treatments that made him ill every Friday.

This situation continued from May 2003 through October 2003. He used the supposed

illness to miss work on Fridays during this time period.

Additionally, Airman Alexander was drunk and disorderly March 28, 2004, at about 4 a.m. in the dormitories. When asked to quiet down by the CQ Airman, he responded that he and his friends were not making too much noise, and did nothing to change the behavior.

When authorities arrived, Airman Alexander had a blood alcohol content level of .15 percent.

Airman Alexander is now serving his confinement at the U.S. Army Confinement Facility Europe in Mannheim, Germany. (31st Fighter Wing Staff Judge Advocate's office and 31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

Malingering

Under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, a person is charged with malingering for avoiding work, duty or service by feigning illness, physical disablement, mental lapse or derangement, or they intentionally inflicted a self-injury.

Safety seats can save childrens' lives

By Airman Rebecca Maurer
31st Fighter Wing
Public Affairs staffwriter

Babies have all sorts of different seats: bouncers, walkers, bathtub seats, high chairs and car seats.

Of all the different places to park their diapered little bottoms, only one can save their life in a car wreck - the child safety seat.

"There are a lot of things to consider when buying a car seat," said Maj. Peter Kim, a pediatrician with the 31st Medical Group. "There is no one car safety seat that is the 'best' or 'safest.' The best child safety seat is one that fits your child's size and weight, can be installed correctly in your car and you will use every time you drive."

The Aviano Child/Passenger Safety Group recommends not using seats more than 10 years old. When shopping for a child safety seat, look on the bottom of the seat for the Department of Transportation label that says "this child restraint system conforms to all applicable federal motor safety standards" and the date of manufacture, according to Tech Sgt. Robert Graham, president of the Aviano Child/Passenger Safety Group.

When parents find a good safety seat, it's best to try it out; this may be difficult if the store does not have demo models, Major Kim said.

"You should at least put your child in the seat and see if they fit," he said.

Parents should follow all directions when installing the child safety seat. Every year children die because of parental failure to use car seats or improper installation of the seat.

"Even small little things like a twisted belt webbing can increase likelihood of injury to the child," Major Kim said.

A newborn seat fits babies from birth to 1 year to at least 20 to 22 pounds. The safest place for newborns is in the back seat in rear-facing safety seats, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Babies can be seriously hurt or killed by an inflating airbag and the driver is less likely to be distracted trying to care for the baby while driving.

Toddlers 1 year and older from 20 to 40 pounds can graduate from the rear-facing restraint to safety seats that face forward, but the NHTSA recommends keeping them in the back seat.

Instructions for using the toddlers' seat are the same as the baby seat. Parents should make sure the straps of the seat go over the child's shoulder and are snug enough that the straps can't be pinched or picked up, said Sergeant Graham.

The NHTSA recommends keeping children in an adjustable seat or toddler seat as long as they will fit.



File photo by Staff Sgt. Mitch Fuqua

Child safety seats must be properly installed in order to protect its occupant.

Small children 4 to 8 years old and under four feet nine inches can use a booster seat. The lap belt should ride across the child's hips, not the stomach, and the shoulder belt shouldn't cross the face or the neck.

"It helps to tell them the booster seat is to sit higher, so they can see out the windows better," said Sergeant Graham.

Big kids weighing 70 pounds or more can ride with a regular, according to the NHTSA standard. The child should be tall enough to sit with their knees bent over the edge of the seat.

Putting the shoulder belt behind the back or under an arm drastically reduces its effectiveness.

The only exception to putting children in the back seat is if your car doesn't have a back seat, or isn't equipped with air bags. (Information also from www.nhtsa.gov)

LaLeche League: Expectant and nursing mothers are invited to a breastfeeding support meeting 10 a.m. July 12 in the Chapel Education Center.

Worth Mentioning

"Don't tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results."

- Gen. George S. Patton

"Leaders aren't born - they are made. And they are made just like anything else, through hard work. And that's the price we'll have to pay to achieve that goal, or any goal."

- Vince Lombardi

Web site explains National Security Personnel System

Department of Defense officials launched a Web site to educate civilian employees about the new National Security Personnel System.

NSPS will make changes in the way the department hires, pays, promotes, disciplines and fires civilian employees.

The site is meant to help DOD employees understand the new personnel system, said Brad Bunn, acting deputy program executive officer.

"Change is difficult, and lack of information about coming changes often leads to stress and anxiety and, unfortunately, misperceptions about what those changes really mean," he said.

"We recognize that, and are committed to communicating to our employees about what (the system) will mean to them. The Web site is one communications tool in our toolbox to do that. We will be open, honest and clear about (the system), and our Web site is designed to encourage employee involvement and interest, and minimize misconceptions," he said.

Congress authorized the new personnel system

as part of the fiscal 2004 National Defense Authorization Act, allowing DOD officials new authority to develop new civilian human resources, labor-management relations and employee appeals systems.

The new site offers an overview of what DOD employees can expect from the new personnel system, as well as information regarding issues of labor-management and employee unions, and links to system-related documents.

The site will be a primary communication vehicle, and it will be used throughout all phases of the personnel system design and implementation process, Mr. Bunn said.

"It certainly won't be our only means of communication, but it's a central source of information on NSPS," he said.

"We want to ensure DOD employees have a reliable, continuing source of information as the system develops," he said.

The new Web site is <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/>. (Air Force News Service)

Father's Day Brunch

La Bella Vista hosts a Father's Day Brunch 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Sunday. Seating is limited. Call the club for reservations or prepay in person. Tickets are \$13.95 for adults and \$8.50 for children ages 6-12. Children age 5 and under eat free. Member's First discount is \$3.

Sponsor training

A sponsor training class is 1 to 2 p.m. Wednesday to assist sponsors in helping newcomers start their new assignment off right. The Aviano Family Support Center can bring this training to individual units. Call Ext. 5407 for more information or to sign up.

Finance Closure

The finance office closes June 25 for an official function. For emergencies, call Master Sgt. Andrew Alspaugh at 335-560-1241.

Application training

A job application workshop is 10 a.m. to noon June 25 at the Aviano Family Support Center, covering

electronic resume application process using RESUMIX, electronic vacancy announcements, self-nomination and civilian announcement notification system. Call Ext. 5407 for more information.

Chicago

The Aviano Community Theater presents a musical revue of "Chicago" 7 p.m. June 25 to 27 in the Aviano Community Center ballroom. Admission is \$5.

Mosaic class for kids

The Arts and Crafts Center offers a daily mosaic workshop for kids ages 6 to 13 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. now through July 29. The cost is \$50. Call Ext. 5022 to sign up.

Driving

Use caution when driving past soldiers running in formation. The speed limit for passing formations is 10 mph.

Free childcare

Those ready to PCS or who have just arrived with a child at least 1 year of age are

entitled to free childcare. The Childcare for PCS Certificate is good for 60 days before leaving and 60 days after arriving at a new duty station. Call Ext. 5407 for more information.

Smooth Move

The Smooth Move seminar is 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Fridays, except for base down days and federal holidays, at the Aviano Family Support Center. Attendance is highly encouraged for airmen basic to technical sergeants and second lieutenants to captains. Call Ext. 5407 for more information.

New Program

The Aviano Family Support Center's new family life education program encourages individuals to discover ways to create and maintain a loving home through classes. Call Ext. 5407 for more information.

Reunion briefing

Post-deployment and in-processing briefings are presented Mondays at 10 a.m. (except for holidays, down days and base exercises) at the Family Support Center. Spouses are highly encouraged to attend. These presentations can be arranged at the squadron level for entire units returning from deployment. Call Ext. 5663 for more information.

Predeployment briefing

A predeployment briefing is 9 a.m. Wednesdays except for holidays, down days and base exercises. Those deploying soon can call the Aviano Family Support Center at Ext. 5407 to sign up.

Asilo assistance

The Aviano Family Support Center has information about the Asilo, the Italian preschool, to assist people who are planning to enroll their children in a local preschool. Call Ext. 5407 for more information.

Marriage information

The Aviano Family Support Center assists people

with filing their marriage paperwork and arranging downtown appointments. Call Ext. 5407 for more information.

READiness initiative

The Family Support Center now has capability to record parents reading children's books to their kids on video, CD and DVD. Call Ext. 5663 for more information.

Stars and Strikes

The Aviano Bowling Center offers "Bowl for the Stars and Strikes" promotion through Aug. 31. Visit the Aviano Bowling Center at Ext. 7487 for more information.

Coupon collection

Aviano members can bring their unwanted coupons from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday to the Aviano Family Support Center and pick up the ones they need. Call Ext. 5407 for more information.

Finding resources

Information on community resources is available on the Aviano Family Support Center InfoBank Web site at www.avianofsc.org. There are now more than 115 pages of resources.

PCS advice

Members PCSing soon can go to the Aviano Family Support Center for information about their new base. Base brochures, videos and items to use while waiting for household goods shipment are available to check out. Call Ext. 5407 for more information.

Oil change

Spouses of Air Force members deployed more than 30 days are eligible to receive a free oil change for their primary vehicle. Call Ext. 5407 for more information.

Volunteers needed

The Aviano Thrift Shop needs volunteers to sort and shelf items and help customers. Call Ext. 5428 for more information.

Reel Times

Today - 5 p.m. "The Prince and Me" Rated PG - Paige chooses between being a princess or a doctor. Starring: Julia Stiles and Luke Mably.

8 p.m. - "Laws of Attraction" Rated PG - 13 - Audrey and Daniel, often oppose each other in court, but are drawn to each other. Starring: Pierce Brosnan and Julianne Moore.

Saturday - 7 p.m. "Jersey Girl" Rated PG-13 - Ollie moves to Jersey, where he finds a new romantic interest. Starring: Ben Affleck and Liv Tyler.

Sunday - 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. "The Passion of the Christ" Rated R - This movie follows the last 12 hours of Christ's life. Starring: Jim Caviezel

Wednesday - 7 p.m. "Laws of Attraction"

Thursday - 7 p.m. "The Prince and Me"

June 25 - 5 p.m. "Home on the Range" Rated PG - Farm animals band together to save the farm they live on. Starring: Roseanne Barr and Cuba Gooding Jr.

8 p.m. - "Van Helsing" Rated PG - 13 - Van Helsing is in an ongoing battle to rid the world of vampires and other ghouls. Starring: Hugh Jackman and Will Kemp.

A little bit of jazz mixed with a whole lot of talent earns one Aviano Airman the nickname

MUSIC MAN

By Airman Rebecca Maurer

31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs staffwriter

Walking past the Aviano Base Exchange on any sunny afternoon recently, one may have heard the mellow notes of Marvin Gaye's "What's Goin' On" drifting from the entrance where a young musician sat relaxing on a marble bench playing his trumpet to a portable stereo.

It's small wonder, then, that this musician could be considered part of Aviano's charm.

"They call me the Music Man," said Airman 1st Class Mark Nicholson, a member of the 31st Services Squadron.

"The first time I played out [around base], it was the 9-11 anniversary. I felt I needed to do something; I wanted to pay homage to the people we lost."

That first appearance led to many others around the base, including the Air Force's birthday celebration.

"I kept coming out because people seemed to enjoy it," said Airman Nicholson.

Master Sgt. Andrea Cowper, 31st Fighter Wing information manager, considers herself a fan.

"I like to go to the BX to see him play. It adds a little bit of class to the area, and makes me feel like I'm in the states again," she said.

The 26-year-old Airman first picked up the trumpet when he was five.

"I didn't choose the trumpet, the trumpet chose me," said Airman Nicholson.

His father, who has taught music from the middle school to university levels since 1960, was a tremendous influence on him, said the Music Man. "My father urged me to play the trumpet, even though I would rather have been playing baseball with friends."

Nicholson said he picked up a lot of things from his father, including a penchant for late-night music sessions. At home, Airman Nicholson and his four siblings often gathered around the organ while his father played.

"We would all have to sing with him deep into the wee hours of the morning," he said.

That may explain why the Music Man plays in front of Area Two Dorm 219 in the middle of the night, sometimes as late as 3 a.m.

"It's a morale thing. Living in the dorm gets depressing," said Airman Nicholson. "I play to escape. It's a beautiful thing to be able to share [the music] and make people smile," he said. "I don't mean any harm to the people trying to sleep."

A penchant for late-night music sessions wasn't the only thing his father passed to Airman Nicholson. The elder trumpet player performed with Clarence Carter, Sam and Dave, James Brown and



Senior Airman Priscilla Robinson

Airman 1st Class Mark Nicholson began playing the trumpet when he was 5 years old. "I didn't choose the trumpet, the trumpet chose me," he said.

Etta James and Airman Nicholson considers those some of his favorite performers.

He experienced his own brush with fame in the summer of 2002. While street-performing in Greektown Detroit, Grammy-award winning singer Macy Gray walked up to him.

"She said 'Hey, baby...' and handed me a folded up \$100 bill! That was one of the coolest moments in my life," said Airman Nicholson.

The Music Man likes to play anything with a touch of jazz, with the exception of marches.

Aside from playing in his high school band, the Detroit native studied music at Michigan State University and continues to practice at least an hour every day.

"The coolest compliment I ever received was by someone who wrote a poem for me one day at Michigan State," he said. "I was sitting, just like I do in front of the BX, playing 'What a Wonderful World' by Louis Armstrong. A person handed me a note that read: 'Sunny day jazz...blue-eyed sunglasses...sitting here listening to this 'wonderful world'...people walking by...uncaring...my one true love...MUSIC.' That was the best, because this person could feel what I felt inside," he said.

After enlisting in the Air Force, Airman Nicholson auditioned for its entertainment group, Tops in Blue.

"My audition was fantastic," he said. "I submitted a tape in February and was selected to participate in the world-wide talent contest. There were so many talented singers, dancers and musicians there. It was like being at Hitsville Motown studio back in the day. Everywhere you

looked, someone was practicing - singing, dancing or rehearsing an act."

He said he really enjoyed the entire audition process. Although he wasn't selected this year, he still felt honored to participate.

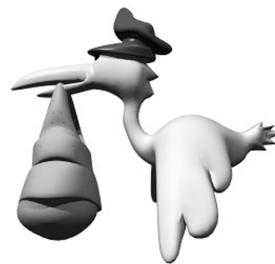
"Who knows, maybe next year I'll get lucky and have my name called," said the Music Man.

The Music Man recently deployed and the streets of Aviano lost a little of its charm.

Though Dorm 219 residents may now be able to sleep in quiet peace, somewhere in the desert, the cool, jazzy notes of a trumpet can be heard floating from the entrance of a BX tent, where a young musician sits relaxing.



Some of Airman Nicholson's musical inspirations include: Louis Armstrong James Brown Ray Charles and his all-time favorite, Marvin Gaye



***Photos by Senior Airman
Priscilla Robinson***

(Information from Chase's Calendar of Events)

Briefs

Practical tips

People who want to visit some local villas or take a week-end trip can attend the Practical Tips for Weekend Trips class 4:30 to 7 p.m. Monday at the Aviano Family Support Center. Call Ext. 5407 for more information.

Outdoor recreation

Aviano members can stop by Outdoor Recreation to check out the selection of equipment for rent there, or visit www.31svs-aviano.com for a complete list. Call Ext. 8623 for more information.

Antique markets

Many area villages hold regularly-scheduled monthly antique markets.

The schedule below identifies the day on which antique markets are held: **first Saturday and Sunday** - Arezzo and Genova; **first Sunday only** - Casarsa, Codroipo, San Quirino; **second Saturday and Sunday** - Vittorio Veneto, Ferrara, Gorizia, Marostica, Pissignano di Campello (Perugia), Udine; **second Sunday** - Asolo, Montepulchiano (Siena), Portobuffole, Florence, Montegrotto (Padova), Sacile, Noale (Venezia), Villa Franca (Verona), Venzona (Udine); **third Saturday and Sunday** - Verona; **third Saturday and Sunday** - Lucca, Ravenna; **third Sunday** - Este (Padova), Godega Sant'Urbana, Montebelluna, Fonta-nellato (Parma) Padova, Badoere (past Treviso), Sienna, Soave (Verona), Trieste; **fourth Sunday** - Imola (Bologna), Conegliano, Cividale del Friuli, Treviso.



Courtesy photo

Lignano beach is most crowded in August, when many Europeans take their vacations.

Aviano Day Trips: Part 1

Lignano: Home to "golden sand"

Lignano Sabbiadoro could probably be called a little piece of paradise with its sandy beaches, blue lagoons and exotic birds. Even better, it's only an hour drive from Aviano.

The town of Lignano Sabbiadoro is very small, with only 5,700 inhabitants who live there year-round. The name itself means "Lignano: Land of Golden Sand." It features eight kilometers of coastline and is considered the main beach of the Friuli Venezia Giulia region.

In the summer, the town's population swells to more than 40 times its normal numbers. It's most crowded in August and it's small wonder this tiny village has such a draw - it features a harbor with more than 5,000 boats, a waterpark, an 18-hole golf course, a zoo and a little park devoted to Ernest Hemingway, who frequented the beach in the 1930s.

The history of Lignano is relatively young, compared to other Italian beaches. The village was founded in 1900. At that time, it was still a marsh and parts of it were reachable only by boat from the Marano lagoon. Within that village are three parts - Sabbiadoro (which is the "oldest", dating back to World War I), Lignano Pineta (the most posh with modern villas and a buzzing night life) and Lignano Riviera (which is the youngest part and still fairly wooded with thermal baths).

The zoo in Lignano hosts about 1,200 animals with 200 different species.

To learn more about the thermal baths or the zoo, visit www.aptlignano.it and click on TERME (then TERME DI LIGNANO) for the baths, and PARCHI GIOCO (then PARCO ZOO) for the zoo.

If the village isn't appealing itself, perhaps the lagoon of Marano lagunare will do. It's about 30 to 40 minutes by car from Lignano. The lagoon was purchased from the Austrians in 1543. Very few remnants of that past remain, but a very interesting "eco system" was established and is now home to many different kinds of birds. Bird watchers will find shelters full of pictures, information and telescopes to watch birds such as the red heron and ducks residing there.

A visit to some fishermen houses at the natural reserve can be a visit into the past. Called "casoni," these houses were actually little huts used by fishermen during the week so they wouldn't have to return home every evening during a fishing trip. To find out more about these huts and the natural reserve, call the visitors' center there at 0431-67-551. Next week: **Bibione** (31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs and Monica Del Rizzo)

How to get there

From Pordenone, take **A28** to Portogruaro. Then, take **A4**, direction Trieste. Take the **Latisana exit**. Follow signs straight to **Lignano**. It's typically a one-hour drive. Be mindful of the speed limits, and drive carefully.

Aviano Day Trips - If it's an interesting location within a three-hour drive from Aviano, we'll feature it. Send suggestions to vigileer@aviano.af.mil

People can visit Romeo and Juliet's balcony in Verona, Italy.



Courtesy photo

ITT: Information, Tickets and Travel

Upcoming tours from the Information, Tickets and Travel office include:

- Wine tasting in Alto Adige - Today

- Verona Medieval dinner - Today
 - Castle Brando Spa - Monday
- Travelers are invited to make an appointment with an ITT travel representative to design the perfect vacation.

For more information about ITT tours, call Ext. 5072 or 5026.

Sports Briefs

Father's Day special

There is 10 percent off any item during the Father's Day sale now through Sunday at the Alpine Golf Course.

Swim passes

Outdoor Recreation offers swim passes. For prices call Ext. 8623 or visit www.31svs-aviano.com and click on Base Pool.

Cheerleaders

A Universal Cheer Association cheer camp is Sept. 3 to 5 at Kaiserslautern High School. The cost is \$95. Call Jane Varalli at DSN 489-7541 or e-mail at Jane_Varalli@eu.odedodea.edu.

Softball

The All-nighter Softball Tournament on field three starts at 7 p.m. today. All are invited to watch 12 teams play to the end.

Swim lessons

The Aviano Base Pool offers swimming lessons Tuesday through Friday, now until June 25. The cost is \$35. Check out the 31st Services Squadron Web site at www.31svs-aviano.com, click on Base Pool for more details. Classes include: Level I - Introduction to Water Skills, Level II - Fundamental Aquatic Skills, Level III and IV - Stroke Development Parent and Child Aquatics.



Kuk Sool Won achievers

Congratulations to the following Aviano Kuk Sool Won team members who recently competed in Norwich, England, in the 2004 United Kingdom European Championships: Amado Garcia, instructor and third Degree Black Belt; Thomas White, instructor and second Degree Black Belt (congrats for his third degree Black Belt promotion); George Mejia, first Degree Black Belt; Aisha Crossdale, first Degree Black Belt; Dylan Mejia, first Degree Black Belt; Cameron Adelman, Brown Belt; Jordan Adelman, Brown Belt; Hunter Adelman, Brown Belt; Ashley Bellmore, Red Belt; Tarren Bryant, Blue Belt; Patrick Phillips, Yellow Belt; Thomas Roback, Yellow Belt; and Jenna Roback, Yellow Belt. Team members competed in at least three of the following events: weapons form, open hand form, techniques, and sparring. The Aviano KSW team brought home 16 medals, five gold, four silver, five bronze, and two copper.

Get the recognition - Send us information about your sports team, games and championships to vigileer@aviano.af.mil.

Air Force Marathon set for September at Wright-Patt

Air Force officials will hold the 8th annual Air Force Marathon at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, Sept. 18.

The marathon will include a half-marathon, wheelchair race, four-person relay and 5K race.

The deadline for early registration is July 1, and all entries must be in by Sept. 7. The race is open to the public.

Besides traditional awards for top finishers of each race, marathon committee officials will present awards to the top finishers from each major command, as well as to the command with greatest participation.

"The Air Force Marathon is open to the public, but being a military marathon, we felt

that we needed to increase the military base competition," said Bob Brodess, Air Force Marathon director.

The medals will be imprinted with the F-117 Nighthawk, this year's featured aircraft. The course is unchanged from the past, marathon officials said.

For more information about marathon events, visit the Air Force Marathon Web site at <http://afmarathon.wpafb.af.mil>.



Worth Mentioning

"Champions aren't made in the gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them - a desire, a dream, a vision."

- Muhammad Ali

Did you know?

Girls who play sports have higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of depression than girls who do not play sports, according to the book *Evening the Odds: Adolescent women, tobacco and physical activity*.

Where do you go for fitness professionals?

The

Dragon Fitness Center

Call Ext. 7459 to get your personal trainer today!

Aviano Airmen graduate from ALS

Congratulations to the following senior airmen (unless otherwise noted) for their recent graduation from the Aviano Airman Leadership School. This school is the first step of professional military education for the Air Force's enlisted corps. Airmen must attend this 24-day course in order to obtain the title "supervisor."

Courtney Gordon, 31st Operations Support Squadron – John Levitow and Leadership awards recipient

Katherine Rodgers, 31st Maintenance Group – Academic award recipient

Gwendolyn Jones, 31st Fighter Wing – Distinguished Graduate

Jason Curra, 31st Logistics Readiness Squadron – Distinguished Graduate

Jeffrey Watson, 31st Maintenance Squadron – Distinguished Graduate

Vincent Abad, 31st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

Staff Sgt. Mark Bell, 31 AMXS

Jeanette Blankenship, 31 AMXS

Jacob Brown, 31 AMXS

Theron Canale, 31 AMXS

Jeffrey Ross, 31 AMXS

Mario Kovach, 31st Civil Engineer Squadron

Staff Sgt. Stephanie Werner, 31 CES

Staff Sgt. Scott Shelf, 31st

Communications Squadron

Shimon Thomas, 31 CS

Karmen Hill, 31st Dental Squadron

Samuel McGlockton, 31st LRS

Jason Monn, 31 LRS

Ricardo Osario, 31 LRS

Joe Walling, 31 LRS

Staff Sgt. Jason Melton, 31st Munitions Squadron (Camp Darby)

Shawanda Jenkins, 31st Maintenance Group

Eric Applen, 31st Maintenance Squadron

Jenny Baldner, 31 MXS

Staff Sgt. Andrué Donaldson, 31 MXS

Darron Johnson, 31 MXS

Deshawn Smith, 31 MXS

Luke Woydziak, 31 MXS

Staff Sgt. Lissette Dacumos, 31st

Mission Support Squadron

Julius Paul Dacumos, 31st Security Forces Squadron

Michael Mejia, 31 SFS

Christopher Shubik, 31 SFS

Kenneth Spencer, 31 SFS

Jason Spry, 31 SFS

Denise Bhola, 31st Services Squadron

Staff Sgt. Lovelynn Ramil, 31 SVS

Alexa Nanetti, 31 SVS

Staff Sgt. Michael Santos, 496th Air Base Squadron (Moron Air Base, Spain)

Seth Kewley, 603rd Air Control Squadron

David Mitchell, 603 ACS

Glendon Brown, 831st Munitions Squadron (Ghedi Air Station)

Kudos: Recognizing those who serve

"Many thanks to the **more than 40 Aviano community members** (both military and civilian) who helped my Honors English 10 students at Aviano High School over the last two months with their "I-Search" projects. These research projects were on topics as diverse as archery, ADHD, eating disorders, the Mafia, sky-diving and child development. The willingness to share books and other materials, as well as to take time out of busy schedules to allow my students to conduct interviews was truly appreciated by both the students and by me. I would especially like to thank **Mr. Paul Moore** (schools officer) and **Lt. Col. Michael Morris** for disseminating the list of our research topics basewide."

*Sue Maloney,
Aviano High School*

"I would like to express my gratitude to the two following people: **Master Sgt. Steven Bagley** from the 31st Communications Squadron and **Mrs. Mandi Ford**, the Career Assistance Advisor volunteer. Sergeant Bagley designed and built the foundation for the new Enlisted Portal. This foundation allowed Mrs. Ford to turn my vision into the Career Assistance Advisor Web page. Both spent many long hours working on the page. Without their help, it would not have happened."

*Master Sgt. Dave Poulin,
31st Fighter Wing Career Assistance Advisor*

"The Aviano Thrift Shop wishes to thank the following for their outstanding contributions. The **Aviano Middle School Girl Scouts** continue to volunteer on a regular basis. They sort clothes, clean and put items away. They bring a lot of energy to the shop, and we appreciate it. We also wish to thank our new Thrift Shop advisor, **Melanie Polasek**. She's stepped right in and has become a vital part of our team. And last, but certainly not least, we wish to acknowledge **Lisa Bayer**, our head volunteer. Lisa has done it all - from creating our Kids Korner and Book Nook to streamlining our processes to helping customers. Her enthusiasm and dedication to the job is a key factor to the shop's success. Thank you."

Aviano Thrift Shop management



Cornerstone

An indispensable and fundamental basis

The **Cornerstone Page** is devoted to those who support: junior enlisted, NCOs, CGOs and spouses. It's to share advice, ideas and opinions dealing with life in the Air Force and Aviano. It's also a forum to recognize those around us. The **Cornerstone Page** will also offer Air Force trivia and facts.

Submission info

We want to hear from you. Flex your writing talents and share your thoughts with us and the community. To submit:

Commentaries:

Writers can send commentaries to vigileer@aviano.af.mil. Commentaries must be 500 to 700 words.

Topics must be applicable to the Air Force, Aviano and appeal to the general public. For questions or concerns, call the Vigileer at Ext. 7344.

Kudos: Aviano members can send kudos to Vigileer @aviano.af.mil with the subject line "Kudos." Kudos can be submitted for appreciation, retirements, awards, good service, promotions and graduations. For questions or concerns, call the Vigileer at Ext. 7344.

Deadline: The deadline for submitting information is close of business Thursday one week prior to publication. Faxed articles will not be accepted by the staff. The public affairs office is in Bldg. 1360, Room 19.